

### ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a water pump in addition to the impeller system of a marine propulsion system. This allows the water pump to operate independently of the impeller if a clutch is provided which disconnects the  
5 impeller from torque transmitting relation with an engine. When a clutch is not provided, the independent water pump of the present invention allows the marine propulsion system to be operated at a lower idle speed than would otherwise be possible because the impeller is not relied upon for a flow of cooling water to the engine.